

Scattergood Friends School
School Committee Meeting
Open Session Minutes
11 November, 2017

Mission Statement

Scattergood Friends School challenges students with a college-preparatory curriculum, farm experience, a shared work program, and community living in the spirit of Quaker faith.

Present: Phil Henderson, LaëL Gatewood, Dan Schlitt, Bob Winkleblack, Lucy Marsh, Ruth Hampton (clerk), Karen Greenler, Rebecca Bergus, Bob Winchell, Roy Helm, Russ Leckband, Kent Tjossem, Ann Robinson, Tom Wahl, Gail Nelson

Regrets: Shana Wagner, Katherine Young, Ginny Winsor

Staff Present: Thomas Weber, Tim Schulte, Amy King Weber, Mark Quee, Jenn Jansen, Kim Jones, Sam Taylor

Friends settled into worship around 9:00 a.m. The clerk read:

“Don’t limit God to what our capabilities are.”

~Deb Dakin

Minute: We approved the minutes, open and closed, of 9 September, 2017.

Subcommittee reports were kept brief to accommodate the rest of the agenda. The Admissions report is quite complete, our enrollment is low but no losses this fall and Jenn is working on developing leads for semester admissions. Most fall enrollment inquiries come in late spring and summer. The Academic subcommittee didn’t meet but the report is self-contained. Farm term was more cohesive and good for community building and there were opportunities for student leadership with both the Governor’s visit and the Harvest Festival. The Facilities subcommittee discussed long-range options for changing to a gravity-feed septic field. There would be significant energy savings so there might be grants or low-interest loans for this change. Kent will do landscaping behind the west dorm to mitigate drainage issues. Want list includes: transport van and farm vehicle. The Development subcommittee reviewed progress on the Development plan. Harvest Festival was very successful with over 90 non-Scattergood guests (beyond students, parents and alumni) and Irving’s stove campaign achieved its goal. Thomas and Ruth had a good trip to California for alumni gatherings where 26 alumni attended, and this has already positively impacted the Annual Fund. We are on track for Annual Fund fall contributions, with a long way to go.

Spiritual and Community Life reported that things are good for staff and students but all are ready for fall break. Allison, the mental health counselor, is working well and building good rapport with the students. She is doing more assessment than individual counseling, referring out for that. The revision of the slip system has created a less adversarial tone around behavior issues and everyone seems to be working to increase accountability. There was a discussion about encouraging student vocal ministry in Collections. The HR sub-committee met with Thomas to review his goals. The Head survey will come out before winter break and HR will put together a specific survey for School Committee members. Parents were surveyed about the school by the school (not by School Committee) last year as part of a survey of the whole constituency. Results were positive.

Our operating statement had no surprises. We are running within budget and the budgetary accuracy is good. The cash flow is sufficient for the next couple of months and there will be a significant annual shortfall due to this year’s low enrollment. The Measey income will be about \$19K higher than budgeted and the Student Tuition Organization money (about \$15K) is not listed. There may be a somewhat higher income from the Scattergood School Foundation Westwood #2 account, but that negotiation is still in process. The transition in the business office has been smooth.

Minute: We accept the Operating Statement of 1 November 2017.

The Farm report was good and projects are being finished. The Paddock project is delayed because the engineer needs to approve the water line. There was a large turkey harvest (23 birds) which will supply turkey to the school for the year.

In the Head Report Thomas shared he will join Catherine From (now at Sandy Springs) and an educator from Maine to present at the national conference of Independent Educational Consultants and share about Scattergood's process to create a transgender and gender-fluid inclusive policy. Safety issues for gender non-binary students are a serious concern. The campus visit by Iowa's Governor Kim Reynolds was very positive, from student presentations on sustainability at the farm to lunch with food from the farm. It was suggested that the school look into an Iowa Energy Agency. Thomas relayed about his focus on nurturing an atmosphere where everyone could enjoy each new day despite concerns. It's important to have fun and enjoy each day.

Kim Jones's husband was introduced at a Lions' Club meeting in West Branch where Representatives Loeb sack and Kaufman were in attendance. He was introduced as "living at Scattergood" which generated some good publicity. The school works to cultivate relationships with all our governmental representatives, regardless of party. A Department of Health Services administrator came to review Scattergood as a Child Residential Facility and was very complimentary, and also quite excited to learn of Scattergood's hostel years in the 1930's. An email request will be forthcoming to all of us to contact our federal representatives to help solve a visa problem for a student from Ethiopia. Watch for an email to find out how we can help. An excellent brunch was shared by all.

We discussed the school's work on the Strategic Plan for Long-Term Sustainability. In October a 1.5 day workshop was held for staff to view and create the next steps of the strategic plan. The discussions began by posing the question of what was inspirational and uplifting to the staff. When they reviewed the mission statement, many staff found it too staid and stiff to capture their energy and enthusiasm. The possibility of adding a more vibrant vision statement to augment the mission statement was discussed. Their Sunday session left many staff concerned that there would not be answers that day about how to manage the school's enrollment and financial difficulties. The report of the retreat arrived a few weeks later and the language is, like the mission statement, more suited for administrative and policy (external) discussions and less for the inspiration of the staff and students (internal.) There may be a need for different representations of the plan for these two purposes.

Thomas will send out the graphics showing both things that have been accomplished and those things that the school is working towards. There is a need to add new program initiatives. The five ideas that are currently being entertained are:

- 1) Create an independent 5th year HS program
- 2) Partner with Grinnell College to create a pre-college year or "red shirt" program for students who are admitted to Grinnell, but have deferred start dates to complete a transitional year at Scattergood.
- 3) Expand the summer program – Horizons
- 4) Expand our academic program to include curriculum in Culinary Arts.
- 5) Establish a Montessori-style middle school in Iowa City.

We discussed that in pursuing one or another initiative it is critical to harness staff energy. What is the staff excited about? All the plans need further research and we proposed dividing the plan into two parts: one by and for the staff focusing on implementation and programs, and one by the School Committee focusing on administrative and financial issues.

The clerk adjourned the open meeting to proceed into closed session.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Greenler, acting recording clerk

Next Meetings: January 13, March 17, May 5, and July 24 (Tuesday of the Yearly Meeting annual session)